

BEAVERTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 3, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

On Thursday, June 3, 2010, at 7:04 p.m., Chairman Scott Knees called the Traffic Commission meeting to order in the Forrest C. Soth City Council Chamber, 4755 SW Griffith Drive, Beaverton, Oregon.

ROLL CALL

Traffic Commissioners present included Scott Knees, Patrick Reynolds, Steve Harris, Vincent Tran, and Thomas Engel. Commissioner Lauren Holmes was excused.

City of Beaverton staff included City Transportation Engineer Jabra Khasho, Traffic Sergeant Steven Schaer, and Commission Recorder Debra Callender.

VISITORS

No one from the audience came forward to speak.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Khasho had no opening comments.

CONSENT

Chairman Knees reviewed the consent agenda comprised of the draft minutes of the May 6, 2010, meeting and Final Written Order on Issue TC 669 "Parking Restrictions on SW Campion Court South of Bluebell Lane" from the meeting of May 2010.

Chairman Knees made a minor change to the May minutes.

Commissioner Reynolds MOVED, SECONDED by Chairman Knees to approve the minutes of the May 6 meeting as corrected. Question called on the motion.

Commissioners Knees and Reynolds voted AYE, the MOTION CARRIED. (2:0)
Commissioners Tran, Engel, and Harris abstained, as they had been absent.

Commissioner Reynolds MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Harris to approve the final written order on Issue TC 669 "Parking Restrictions on SW Campion Court South of Bluebell Lane" from the meeting of May 2010. Question called on the motion.
Commissioners Knees, Reynolds, Tran, Engel, and Harris and voting AYE, the MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (5:0)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Issue TC 671: Parking Revisions on SW Adele Drive between Valeria View Drive and 105th Terrace

Chairman Knees opened the public hearing.

Staff Report:

Mr. Khasho said Mr. Tali Poretis contacted the City and requested removal of the parking restrictions on the south side of SW Adele Drive near 106th Place; Mr. Poretis told staff there is a high demand for on-street parking and residents fill this need by parking illegally in the no-parking zone across from 106th Place.

Mr. Khasho said Adele Drive was constructed as part of the Peterkort Village Development that was approved and constructed under Washington County standards before the area was annexed into the City of Beaverton. He said Adele Drive is classified as a Local Street; it is 28 feet wide, and carries approximately 135 vehicles per day. He said current City standards allow parking on both sides of 28-foot wide Local Streets with traffic volumes less than 500 vehicles per day. Adele Drive meets those criteria.

Mr. Khasho said Adele Drive has no-parking zones for approximately 50 feet at each intersection corner to protect sight distance. He said allowing additional on-street parking along this section of Adele Drive would not affect sight distance or the turn at 106th Place. Based on these facts, staff recommends removing the parking restrictions on the south side of Adele Drive across from 106th Place.

Commissioner Engel noted that 28-foot roadways are common in the compressed development model now used for new construction. He asked about the differences between the local fire code and the City Engineering Design Manual.

Mr. Khasho the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue (TVF&R) Fire Marshal reviews all new development plans and understands the City's requirements; nevertheless, TVF&R continues to recommend wider streets and wider standards to accommodate their equipment. He said the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) states local and city standards supersede the fire code. He pointed out that Deputy Fire Marshal Karen Mohling acknowledges that difference in the last paragraph of her email on TC 671. He said the price of purchasing additional right-of-way property makes narrower streets more fiscally practicable for developers.

Commissioner Engel asked if Mr. Khasho knew of any streets the City widened because of a Fire Marshal request.

Mr. Khasho said he is aware of several corner radii being altered, also roundabouts, and cul-de-sacs; he knows of no street that was widened based solely on a TVF&R request.

Commissioner Tran asked about the street width on Adele Drive near 107th Avenue.

Mr. Khasho said Adele is 32-feet wide at 107th.

Commissioner Tran wondered if a fire truck could safely turn with cars parked on both sides of a 28-foot street.

Mr. Khasho said there are no-parking zones at all intersection corners and these allow enough room for a fire truck to turn safely.

Commissioner Harris asked if Mr. Khasho considered the Fire Marshal's letter when he made his recommendation.

Mr. Khasho said he did.

Chairman Knees asked why this area was originally posted as a no-parking zone.

Mr. Khasho said he could only offer his opinion as the development was approved by the County. He supposed the designer looked at the plan and made an engineering judgment based on the change in street width from 32 to 28 feet. He said 106th has only six properties so the number of cars turning from that street is very low.

Public Testimony:

The Commission received written testimony on this issue from Traffic Sergeant Steve Schaefer and (TVF&R) Deputy Fire Marshal Karen Mohling (on file).

No one came forward to testify.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Khasho had no further comments.

Commissioner Engel said that the City of Portland Fire and Rescue has purchased several narrower fire trucks to reach homes on constricted streets in the West Hills. He also read that TVF&R has equipped some Toyota cruisers as emergency vehicles.

Chairman Knees closed the public hearing.

Commission Deliberation:

Commissioner Engel said he once lived in a compressed, infill area with parking on both sides of a narrow street. He asked TVF&R if their trucks could access his street in an emergency. He was told that yes, they would find a way to push their way through if needed. He said when he visited Adele Drive he saw two parked cars—one was parked legally and one was not. He said here was no way two typical cars could have passed between them. He believes this type of issue will repeatedly come before the Commission as housing density increases and residents fail to adjust their expectations about the number and size of vehicles they can own in compressed neighborhoods. He said neighbors purchased homes in this neighborhood because they wanted a certain quality of life and we should not expand available parking based on one request. He said they could assume most people in the neighborhood are perfectly happy and they knew in advance that street parking was limited. He will vote against the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Tran said he lives near this location and frequently walks his dogs in this area; he has not observed a high demand for on-street parking. He said it is unfortunate the requestor did not attend the hearing to discuss his point of view. He said the Fire Marshal's letter stated that they must have 20 feet of unobstructed road width; allowing parking on both sides would not allow enough room for fire vehicles. He will not vote to approve the staff recommendation. He noted that two adjacent areas still allow on-street parking and he wondered if that might be a separate issue. He thought the Commission might want to discuss banning all parking on the south side of Adele Drive.

Commissioner Reynolds pointed out that no one from the neighborhood attended or sent written testimony to express an opinion either for or against the request. He concurs with Commissioners Engel and Tran.

Commissioner Harris said there are only about ten houses that are affected and not one of them sent testimony on this issue. He is not even sure where the requestor lives. Based on the lack of public interest, he will vote against the recommendation. He said the staff recommendation makes sense technically, but there seems to be no public interest in more on-street parking.

Chairman Knees said he prefers not to restrict parking on public streets. If the street is wide enough, the public should be allowed to utilize on-street parking as needed. Regarding Commissioner Engel's comments about infill and narrower streets, he said another current trend is the frequency of adult children moving home to live with their parents. This often means the family needs on-street parking for an extra car that does not fit in the garage or driveway; this trend increases the demand for on-street parking in neighborhoods. He will support the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Engel said he feels the Chairman's view is incorrect on this issue and said this kind of parking decision rests on personal values. He said some developers use compressed neighborhood design because new development land is scarce and expensive. He said these new neighborhoods were designed with narrow streets for specific reasons and the Commission should support that logic. The other option is to allow more on-street parking based solely on the lifestyle choices of residents. He feels the Commission should respect the constricted design of these neighborhoods and not allow more on-street parking; then, it will be more difficult for mom, dad, and each teen to all have their own cars. He maintained that Chairman Knees' viewpoint is wrong.

Commissioner Engel MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Tran to deny the request in Issue TC 671 "Parking Revisions on SW Adele Drive between Valeria View Drive and 105th Terrace" as written.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Engel, Tran, Harris, and Reynolds voted AYE. Chairman Knees voted NO. The MOTION CARRIED. (4:1)

Mr. Khasho said he would bring a revised final written order with the Commission's recommendation to the next meeting for approval.

Issue TC 672: Speed Zoning on SW 170th/173rd Avenue between Baseline Road and Walker Road

Chairman Knees opened the public hearing.

Staff Report:

Mr. Khasho said construction on SW 170th/173rd Avenues is now finished; this project completed the gaps on 170th and aligned that street with 173rd Avenue near Walker Road. He said 170th/173rd now connects Baseline Road to Walker Road. He said that previously, 173rd extended in a straight line from Baseline to Walker Road. That road still exists. The new project added several sections on 170th, including one near the school.

Mr. Khasho said 170th currently has a posted speed of 35 mph; however, no official state speed zone order was ever issued to support that speed limit. The old section of 173rd is posted at 35 mph and has a legal speed zone order. Mr. Khasho said the design speed on 170th is 35 mph. It is classified as an arterial street and the speed limit on arterials by state statute is 55 mph. To have a speed lower than 55 mph on an arterial requires a speed zone review by Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and a new speed zone order. The statute allows the roadway authority—meaning the local jurisdiction—to issue a temporary speed zone order with a time limit. He asked the Commission to establish a temporary speed order for 35 mph and forward to the state a request for a permanent speed order for 35 mph. The temporary speed order would expire one year from the date of City Council approval.

Mr. Khasho explained that the 35 mph speed was determined based on the 85th percentile speed. He said the 85th percentile speed is used in transportation engineering to indicate the upper speed limit for reasonable and prudent drivers. He said speed studies showed the 85th percentile speeds on 170th/173rd were between 38 and 40 mph. The first criteria ODOT considers during a speed study are the 85th percentile speed, the design speed, and amount of access on the street. He said posted speeds are often within 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed. More than a 5 mph difference and drivers are less likely to obey the speed limit. If the Commission recommends a speed of 35 mph, he thinks it is likely ODOT will honor that request.

Public Testimony:

The Commission received written testimony on this issue from Traffic Sergeant Steve Schaer and (TVF&R) Deputy Fire Marshal Karen Mohling (on file).

No one came forward to testify on this issue.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Khasho had no additional comments.

Chairman Knees closed the public hearing.

Commission Deliberation:

Commissioner Harris said he drove 170th/173rd Avenue and he supports the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Engel agreed and said he trusts the engineers on this one. He said any speed beyond 35 mph feels out of control.

Commissioner Tran agreed with the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Reynolds said he understood Mr. Khasho to say that 85 percent of the vehicle speeds measured were between 38 and 40 mph. He asked if the remaining 15 percent were driving faster than 40 mph.

Mr. Khasho said 15 percent were driving faster than 40 mph, though this did not happen at every location where staff took measurements.

Commissioner Reynolds asked if any were driving 60, 65, or even 80 mph.

Mr. Khasho answered no. He said several were driving at 55 mph with the remainder driving at 46 to 50 mph.

Commissioner Reynolds said he supports the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Reynolds MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Engels to approve the staff recommendation on Issue TC 672 "Speed Zoning on SW 170th/173rd Avenue between Baseline Road and Walker Road" as written and the draft final written order.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Knees, Reynolds, Engel, Tran, and Harris voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED, unanimously. (5:0)

Issue TC 673: Traffic Enhancement Fund Allocations

Chairman Knees opened the public hearing.

Staff Report:

Mr. Khasho said funding for the Traffic Enhancement Program was part of a tax base measure approved by voters in 1996. In 1997, City Council asked the Traffic Commission to work with staff to develop projects to be funded under the program. These projects have been traffic signal improvements and neighborhood traffic calming projects. Thirty-two projects have been developed since 1997. He said there are no new funds, only the accrued income from interest. The original intention was that all money would be spent within three years; however, with staff's careful stewardship the funds have lasted much longer.

Mr. Khasho said now additional projects have been completed and the final costs are known. Most of these projects were completed below the original cost estimate and this leaves funding for additional projects. He reviewed two projects:

Project No. 32, Signal Communication System Upgrade: The objective of this project was to replace the antiquated copper wire based signal interconnect system on Farmington Road and on Cedar Hills Boulevard with a fiber optic based communication system. The City had spent \$33,000 preparing the groundwork for the installation along Farmington. In 2009, the federal stimulus program funded the implementation of adaptive traffic signals along Farmington, which will also complete the fiber optic cable installations. Using the federal funds saved \$149,000 in Traffic Enhancement funds; this can now be used to expand the project to include fiber optic installations along Hall (from 5th Street to Allen) and Allen (from Wilson to King Boulevard). This also enhances Project No. 26 Signal Software by expanding communication infrastructure and providing reliable communication to the signal system. The fiber optic infrastructure will enable future installation of advanced traffic management systems, such as adaptive signal control and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) measures.

Project No. 33 Pedestrian Countdown Signal Phase 3 is a new project. Pedestrian countdown signals have been installed at 17 locations in Beaverton to help pedestrians better judge their crossing time, reduce pedestrian indecision, and reduce complaints. In 2009, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices was revised and now requires all traffic signals to include pedestrian countdown signals. Staff proposes adding Phase 3 to extend pedestrian countdown signal installations to the remaining 35 city-owned signals at an estimated cost of \$56,000.

Mr. Khasho said they are still working on Project No. 24 Signal Interconnect on Hall and Millikan. They have a pedestrian audible signal reserve and a traffic calming reserve to accommodate requests as they arise. The traffic calming reserve of approximately \$98,000 will be enough to complete the Hart/Bany Road traffic calming project that just met the 67 percent approval requirement and for Main Street that was approved at the last Traffic Commission meeting.

Commissioner Engel asked if the lack of new revenue is because the tax base expired.

Mr. Khasho said that was correct. He said they will continue to follow the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Procedures and as new projects come in staff will work with Council to recommend projects and find funds.

Commissioner Engel asked what the City does with the replaced signal heads.

Mr. Khasho said the metal is recycled and plastic is disposed of.

Commissioner Engel said the signal heads would make good bar decorations and he suggested the City sell them on eBay. He asked what Mr. Khasho would do if he had a "gusher of money" land in his lap and he could spend it on any project to benefit the City.

Mr. Khasho said Beaverton's transportation system needs more capacity projects and those projects are very expensive. That would be a good place for extra funds. Realistically, funding is very tight so it is best to use available funds to increase transportation system efficiency. From a traffic engineering perspective, the adaptive signal system is the most effective use of current technology.

Chairman Knees recalled that improving traffic efficiency was high on the City's Visioning request list.

Commissioner Reynolds agreed that it is wise to finish the projects that have already been started. He said upgrading to the newest technology is an excellent use of funds.

Commissioner Engel applauded staff's use of Traffic Enhancement funds. He again mentioned that selling the old signal heads on eBay could be lucrative for the City.

Mr. Khasho said the City has to go through a state process to auction some large items but the process is not efficient for small items like signal heads. They are better recycled.

Public Testimony:

The Commission received no written testimony on this issue.

No one in the audience came forward to testify.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Khasho had no additional comments.

Chairman Knees closed the public hearing.

Commission Deliberation:

Commissioner Reynolds MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Tran to approve the staff recommendation on Issue TC 673 "Traffic Enhancement Fund Allocations" as written and the draft final written order.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Knees, Reynolds, Engel, Tran, and Harris voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED, unanimously. (5:0)

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Knees announced that Tom Wesolowski had resigned as a Traffic Commissioner. He asked staff when the Commission alternate would fill the vacancy.

Mr. Khasho said City Council would appoint alternate Bradford McClean as a Traffic Commissioner within the next few weeks.

Chairman Knees asked if Council has set a date for their public hearing on TC 666.

Mr. Khasho said the Council hearing is scheduled for June 28.

Commissioner Engel asked what the Commission vote was on TC 666.

Commissioner Harris said the Commission voted (5:1) to reject staff's proposal to stripe bike lanes and revise parking on Lombard Avenue. He added that he was the lone vote in favor of adding bike lanes.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Khasho said he has no business to bring before the Commission in July, so that meeting should be cancelled. No motion is necessary.

Returning to the hearing on TC 672, Chairman Knees asked if it is correct that the legal speed limit on 170th Avenue is currently 55 mph.

Mr. Khasho said that is technically correct; the 35 mph speed zone signs were posted without a state speed order. He said without a speed order from the state to support the posted signs, the court would find a traffic citation invalid. Staff requested a temporary order because the 35 mph speed is not enforceable.

Chairman Knees asked for a report on Hart/Bany traffic calming.

Mr. Khasho said the project is between 165th and 167th on Hart/Bany Roads. He said he has worked with the neighborhood for about six months to develop an acceptable plan. Finally, most agreed but it was still extremely difficult to reach 67 percent neighborhood support for the plan. He said the plan has no speed humps or cushions—only two speed limit display signs to raise driver awareness and a planted median island. He said the small business were against placing anything on the street.

Commissioner Reynolds thanked the Beaverton Police for paying special attention when patrolling his neighborhood on Loon Drive. He said the problems he described to Sgt. Schaer last month have been resolved and the neighborhood is back to normal. Last month, Sgt. Schaer said he would alert officers to watch for suspicious activity in parked vehicles on Loon Drive and he encouraged residents to follow their instincts and call police when they observed activity that felt wrong.

ADJOURNMENT

The June 3 meeting of the Traffic Commission adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Debra Callender, Commission Recorder